

## SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES MINUTES

**September 27, 2013**

The regular meeting of the Council of Trustees of Slippery Rock University was held Friday, September 27, 2013 in the Alumni House and Conference Center. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Mr. Robert S. Taylor, Esq., chairperson.

### **Recording of Attendance**

Trustees present: Mr. Thomas Breth, Mr. Matt Lautman, Dr. Robert Marcus, Commissioner William McCarrier, Dr. Dennis Murray, Ms. Laura Ordaz, Mr. Matthew Shaner, Mr. Jeffrey Smith, Mr. Robert Taylor.

Trustees absent: Senator Mary Jo White, Ms. Suzanne Vessella

### **Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Dr. Murray moved, seconded by Mr. Lautman, approval of the Friday, September 27, 2013 meeting agenda. Motion carried unanimously. (Appendix A)

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Breth moved, seconded by Dr. Murray, approval of the Friday, June 7, 2013 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously. (TAB 1)

### **Public Comments**

**Dr. Patrick Burkhart, president of SRU APSCUF, provided comments:**

Address to the SRU Council of Trustees  
27 September 2013, Patrick A. Burkhart, President, SRU APSCUF

What a handsome group of people!

We have so much to celebrate here at SRU – 125 years of outstanding service to the Commonwealth, so many lives enhanced and careers propelled, including many distinguished alumni who sit with us here today, a sparkling campus, regular announcements of new programs addressing a dynamic market and projected future employment needs. The energy of our students is palpable and the fall weather today, pristine! Let the sun continue to shine upon 'ole SRU. Let music fill the air.

As we have placed our trust in you, our Trustees, in your judgment, your support, and in your advocacy, please remember your allegiance in this moment of greatest need. Several of our sister schools have disclosed workforce plans that have devastated those communities – set a tone of discord and desperation. I really question not only their tactics, but also their intent, and gravely fear the eventual outcomes. Ironically, their plans call for increased recruitment and retention in approaching years. How do they expect that the pervasive trauma that they have chosen to perpetrate will foster institutional resilience? I fear that their program curtailments and the loud broadcasting of their financial frailty have

unleashed a whirlpool of drainage that history will witness to be a self-fulfilling prophecy of collapse. How could they possibly foresee productive outcomes from their actions? I have severe doubts over their leadership.

Cheryl and Philip, I thank you for the grace with which we have engaged with earnest self examination. I greatly appreciate us not yet having experienced an academic tsunami! Your message has been heard loud and clear. No one expects smooth sailing here. I implore you now, to switch into the next phase of stewardship. One in which we quietly concede our limitations and ponder our tactics. Let us stop speaking of the perfect storm, for every salty hand knows not to whistle onboard the ship, lest we call up a hostile wind. Let us continue to prep the ship, but with a steady hand and a twinkle in our eye.

We cannot run this place on our good looks and charm alone. We need enhanced cash flow. I am a soccer Dad. I have taught my daughters to take a knee when a player is down. Bob [Taylor], I am taking a knee for Clarion. I am taking a knee for SRU, for all of PASSHE. I fear that we are witnessing the onset of dismantling our crown jewels, the 14 system schools. I am taking a knee for affordable, accessible, quality public higher education. Please return to the Board of Governors and ask for a 5% tuition increase for next school year. Ask also for it at the next meeting. Please be obstinate holding-out for a decision. Timely information can save jobs, save programs, indeed maintain the robust, comprehensive education historically available from our fine Universities.

I request that every one of us sagely uses your influence with the Board of Governors, the Chancellor's Office and our elected officials, encouraging them to choose to deepen their commitment to SRU and to PASSHE, to bolster the financial commitment of the Commonwealth. As always, I continue to assert to anyone listening, SRU is strong, efficient, and effective. We offer an outstanding educational experience at, really, a remarkable price point. Let us not contribute to our own demise!!!

**Mr. Roger (Buddy) Clements, president of the Student Government Association, provided comments.**

Thank you, trustees, for the opportunity to speak with you today. The SGA executive team has been involved in many activities to engage the student body on campus. Notable mentions include the opportunity to welcome new freshmen and speak to them about the importance of getting involved in student organizations and activities. More than participating, there are many opportunities available to grow and develop as a student and campus community member by stepping up and taking on leadership roles.

I am happy to report that freshmen are taking a heightened interest in becoming involved on campus and in student government activities.

On behalf of SGA, we look forward to a great semester at Slippery Rock University.

## PRESENTATIONS

### **"SRU's 125<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration"**

**Dr. George Mihalik, Ms. Judy Silva, Ms. Laurel Dagnon**

Our co-chairs of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Slippery Rock University provided an update of planning activities. We are 96 days away from kick-off. Stay tuned!

**“Sustainability Enterprise Accelerator – Building ROCK Solid Businesses”**

*“Our Future Depends on the Choices We Make Today”*

Dr. John Golden, director, Sustainable Enterprise Accelerator – School of Business and SEA  
Ambassadors:

Michele Sneddon, Emerging Technologies and Public Relations

Taylor Shenberger, Accounting

Melissa Hubans, Emerging Technology and Graphic Design

Savannah Bryant, History and Philosophy

April Sorce, Business Marketing

Taylor Huerbin, Geography/Environment

Nicholas Tessier, Communications

Cory Forrest, Emerging Technology

*This presentation focused on the mission of The Sustainable Enterprise Accelerator (SEA), a business model focusing on “profit, planet and people.” The business incubator is funded by state grants and is staffed by SRU student interns who assist clients in preparing business plans.*

**Presentation honoring former SRU Trustees:**

Ms. Courtney Baker-Schroat, *presented by Laura Ordaz (Appendix B)*

Ms. Grace O. Hawkins, *presented by Dr. Robert Marcus (Appendix C)*

Dr. John A. Hicks, *presented by Dr. Dennis Murray (Appendix D)*

Mr. Eric L. Holmes (not in attendance) (Appendix E)

Mr. Joshua B. Young (not in attendance) (Appendix F)

## **REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

President Cheryl J. Norton provided remarks (Appendix G)

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Academic Affairs Committee (Agenda, Appendix H)**

Dr. Dennis Murray chairs the Academic Affairs Committee. Dr. Murray provided the following report:

#### **1. Context: Budget pressures**

- Cost increases
- Revenue decreases, including a 3% reduction in credit hours

#### **2. Curriculum plans**

- MBA begins winter 2014.
- Preparing Doctorate in Special Ed. For PASSHE
- Physician’s Assistant Master’s Program Director to be hired to develop program.
- Emerging proposals: MPH, MS Informatics
- ESL program to be offered in spring

### **3. Market development and program prioritization team of administrators and faculty**

- Discussing new market possibilities
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses of programs using criteria such as mission-centrality, profitability, student success, and comparisons with other PASSHE universities to prompt conversations and improvements.

### **4. External validation for Academic Affairs**

- SRU ranked #1 in terms of performance for 2012-13 – increased 2013-14 budget.
- Ratings
  - US News and World Report: Best Regional Universities – North
  - 93<sup>rd</sup> in latest rankings: 3<sup>rd</sup> in PASSHE (West Chester 74<sup>th</sup>, Millersville 81<sup>st</sup>)

## **Finance and Audit Committee (Agenda, Appendix I)**

COT Chair Taylor shared the committee report on behalf of Ms. Suzanne Vessella, chair of the Finance and Audit Committee.

We have reviewed and will vote on a difficult budget for FY 13-14. The next few years will prove to be challenging times for the University. In addition, we have reviewed the contracts, fixed assets and service and supply purchase orders and will vote on those items as well.

The Finance and Administration area conducted divisional strategic planning sessions, resulting in a draft vision, mission and strategic goals that will continue to be refined in the next several weeks. These overarching goals will set the direction for the division including common objectives across multiple departments in the areas of process improvement, automation, financial stewardship, and compliance.

The administration continues dialog and extensive communications with key groups about the financial challenges facing the institution.

The finance area successfully completed external audits of financial results for FY 12-13 by the new auditing firm, CliftonLarsonAllen.

In addition, the finance area completed steps to address the PASSHE procedure on Relationships with Affiliates, including working towards updated Memorandums of Understanding, Fiduciary Agreements and other necessary legal documents with the Foundation, Student Government Association, and Alumni Association.

## **Student Affairs Committee**

Mr. Matt Lautman chairs the Student Affairs Committee. The committee did not meet this time. The committee will meet as part of the December quarterly meeting.

## **University Advancement Committee**

Mr. Matt Shaner chairs the University Advancement Committee. The committee did not formally meet, however, Ms. Barbara Ender, vice-president for University Advancement and Ms. Samantha Swift, director of Development, provided an update to the 125<sup>th</sup> celebration fundraising activities and University Advancement initiatives at executive session this morning.

## **Governance Committee (Agenda – Appendix J)**

Trustee Breth, chair of the Governance Committee, reported on behalf of the committee.

With the departure of Dr. John Hicks, the slate of officers for 2013-2014 was presented for motion, Mr. Robert Taylor, Esq., chair and Dr. Robert Marcus, vice-chair. Mr. Breth moved, seconded by Mr. Lautman, the appointment of Mr. Taylor and Dr. Marcus to their respective posts. Motion carried unanimously. Nominations for secretary will be presented for vote at the December meeting.

The Governance Committee will conduct a first-year evaluation of President Norton for submission PASSHE and Board of Governor's February, 2014. The first year evaluation is informal and does not require an outside consultant to complete the evaluation process.

Mr. Jeffrey Smith was nominated to serve as the PACT representative for SRU Council of Trustees. PACT represents the Pennsylvania Association of Council of Trustees. Mr. Breth moved, seconded by Dr. Marcus, motion carried unanimously.

Trustee William McCarrier will serve as the bridge to the newly formed Community Leadership Forum initiated and led by President Norton. The inaugural meeting of the Forum was held Friday, Oct. 4, 2013 at the Alumni House. President Norton is focusing this group to engage conversation among community leaders and is intended to foster a two-way interaction with community stakeholders through the development, exchange and application of knowledge, information and expertise for mutual benefit. The Forum will meet three times per year.

Dr. Murray proposed that SRU establish a town/gown committee. Dr. Norton pointed out it is quite timely to create such a committee and nurture relationships with our SR community partners. As discussed, a reception on Thursday evening, December 12, is being planned.

The FY 2013-2014 annual PACT membership dues invoice in the amount of \$3,500 was brought forward for approval. **(Appendix K)** The upcoming PACT Conference is scheduled for Oct. 9-10, 2013, hosted by Clarion University.

An executive session is scheduled tomorrow morning, 10: 30 a.m. following a campus tour led by President Norton. **(Agenda – Appendix L)**

Council approved the meeting dates for 2013 – 2014. Mr. Breth moved, seconded by Commissioner McCarrier, motion carried unanimously.

Council will meet on campus:

December 12 & 13, 2013

March 27 & 28, 2014

June 5 & 6, 2014

## **ITEMS FOR COUNCIL ACTION**

### **Budget FY 13-14 (TAB 2)**

Dr. Marcus moved, seconded by Dr. Lautman the approval of the budget for FY 13-14 as submitted. Motion carried unanimously. **(Appendix M)**

Contracts (TAB 3)

Dr. Murray moved, seconded by Dr. Marcus the approval of Contracts as submitted. Mr. Taylor abstained from voting on this item. Motion carried. (Appendix N)

Fixed Assets (TAB 4)

Mr. Breth moved, seconded by Mr. Smith approval of Fixed Assets. Motion carried unanimously. (Appendix O)

Service and Supply Purchase Orders (TAB 5)

Mr. Breth moved, seconded by Mr. Lautman approval of the Service and Supply Purchase Orders. Motion carried unanimously. (Appendix P)

## INFORMATION ITEMS

Next Meeting Dates

December 12 & 13, 2013

March 27 & 28, 2014

June 5 & 6, 2014

Personnel Items (TAB 11) (Appendix Q)Facilities and Planning Active Project List (Cabinet Report) (Appendix R)Divisional Reports (TAB 14)

## FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Tom Breth – Each time I am on campus, this being my fourth Council meeting, I am more impressed with the campus and learn more with each visit. The campus community as a whole is gracious, inviting and helpful. It is an honor to serve as trustee.

Laura Ordaz – It is great to be here and I look forward to the experience. Thank you, former trustees, for your service to the University.

Matt Shaner - I am really impressed with the sense of community at the university. Many moments were highlights today, and I am especially appreciative of the informative campus tour this morning led by President Norton.

Matt Lautman – I am a proud SRU graduate, class of '99. I am so pleased to serve as a trustee and appreciate the opportunity to give back.

Dennis Murray – Welcome new trustees, congratulations on your appointment, I look forward to working with you. Thank you to our former trustees for their service to SRU.

Bob Marcus – Welcome new trustees. For those of you who did not notice, we had a special guest earlier in the audience. Mr. Jerry Bejbl, class of '63, a million dollar donor to SRU.

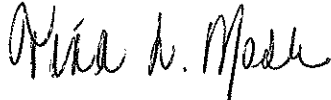
Jeffrey Smith – It is a great pleasure to be here today. Thank you to President Norton and her leadership team for bringing me up to speed. This is a special place with special people.

Commissioner Bill McCarrier – When the Governor's office called, I was honored to be asked to serve as a trustee of this university. As a commissioner, I know the importance of Slippery Rock University to the economy of Butler County, but more importantly, this university provides an exceptional educational experience for the people of Butler County and surrounding areas close to home. I have family members who graduated from Slippery Rock University, including my mother, two aunts, and an uncle. It is a privilege to be here and serve in this capacity.

Bob Taylor – I would like to congratulate Dr. Dennis Murray, who will be honored as a distinguished alum at Homecoming in a few weeks. "Dr. Murray, best wishes and congratulations on this well-deserved honor." I would also like to extend congratulations to Dr. Norton and the campus community. As you may have heard, but it is certainly worth repeating, Slippery Rock University came in #1 in performance indicators in the PASSHE system. This is an incredible accomplishment, not only for the financial reward, but is a clear indicator of Dr. Norton's leadership and the quality of work that goes on at this university. Congratulations to the entire campus community on this achievement!

With no further business, the Friday, September 27, 2013 Council of Trustees meeting at Slippery Rock University adjourned at 2:50 p.m. Dr. Murray moved, seconded by Mr. Breth, a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tina L. Moser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tina" being the most prominent.

Tina L. Moser, Administrative Liaison to the SRU Council of Trustees